SOME NEW BOOKS.

In the Heel of Italy.

It is a surprise to learn that Italy, so thoroughly studied as it would seem, contains a town hitherto practically unknown to travellers and artists. The discoverer is Mr. MARTIN SHAW BRIGGS, who was commissioned by the editor of the *Architectural Review* to explore the city of Lecce and describe and illustrate its buildings. In preparing the short series contributed to that journal Mr. Briggs found so much untouched and valuable material waiting to be collected and recorded that he undertook a more extensive work, of which the outcome is an interesting volume entitled *In the Heel of Italy* (Duffield & Company), illustrated with photographs and the author's own drawings. He has outlined the city's history, described its inhabitants, their interesting province and their remarkable achievements in art, making a complete and accessible whole for the first time in any language. It is true that some persons, chiefly Italians, have written more or less concerning various aspects of the town, and Mr. Briggs furnishes a valuable bibliography of their works, together with a list of books by Lecce authors which do not deal with the city and of other works consulted in preparing his volume. An appendix contains architectural and historical notes on the buildings of the town.

I.

Eight miles from the Adriatic coast and about twice as far from the shores of the blue Ionian Sea, in the rich plain forming the heel of Italy, lies the fair city of Lecce with a noble history and a pulsing present, a city which though of considerable importance to the Italy of to-day is possessed of priceless relics of a past stretching back to the dim tracts on the confines of primitive history.

To claim for a city that it is unknown in the accepted sense would seem to imply that it is also inaccessible, but that does not apply to the case of Lecce. A traveller on a through train from Dieppe or Bologne to Milan will find at the latter city another train, departing from the same platform, which will carry him without change of carriage to Lecce in about twenty hours time. From Rome and Naples also through trains run to Lecce daily; and as Brindisi is only a few miles away tourists from Greece or Egypt might well pay the city a visit, were its name and fame only known to them. The guidebook hints that the journey along the coast line from Rimini to Lecce, on the Milan route just mentioned, is dull and devoid of interest. This is not fair, says Mr. Briggs; but the route from Naples by way of Salerno, Metaponto and Taranto is more interesting, and as it is little known he gives an attractive description of it.

In early times Lecce was a place of great importance; indeed it is only within recent years that people have recognized of how great importance, and in common with other Italian towns it warred with its neighbors in the Middle Ages and still possesses mediæval buildings. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a brilliant architectural period came into being, and to this period the greater part of the city belongs. The older remains, interesting as they are, interfere but little with the general effect of Lecce as a baroque city surrounded by mediæval walls and gates. Amplifying the dictionary definition of baroque as "rough, rude, uncouth, in bad taste," Mr. Briggs gives the technical meaning of the term among architects as conveying a meaning of overelaboration, of ornament misapplied, proportion disregarded and detail used regardless of structural functions. The baroque period in Italy stretches from the times of Palladio in the late sixteenth century to the earlier part of the eighteenth and includes buildings of the most varied description. It is generally believed to owe most of its extravagances to a spirit of reaction against the pedantry of Vignola and his purists. It is an unpopular style and stands in much the same light for critics to-day as "Gothick" did when Wren was studying the elements of English architecture. But for a style of architecture to be unpopular is no hallmark of inferiority, and to set out with the assumption that every baroque building is architecturally bad is as unjust as to condemn a prisoner with sole regard to public feeling. Now, Lecce justifies the existence of the baroque style; that is Mr. Briggs's text. Therefore it is worth the attention of tourists; and it possesses divers attractive characteristics. But though a few choice spirits have visited it and written about it during the past hundred years, their books deal chiefly with other matters than the history and architecture, and the English guidebooks dismiss its claims in about half a page, with one exception, which states that it is "the best built and most civilized town in southern Italy." Suffice it to say that a tourist is always taken by the unsophisticated inhabitants for a Frenchman, a German or an Italian, never for an Englishman.

Lecce has not always borne the same name. The Cretans or whoever were the first settlers probably christened it Lycia, and under the Romans it was known as Lupæ, Lupiæ, or Lypia. Next it became Lycea, Leccio and finally Lecce. In the sixteenth century it bore ten other names, some akin to those given, some totally unlike, which we spare the reader. Just why the city was founded on such an exposed site it is not quite easy to determine. The sea is eight miles away, the water supply is scanty and the town is exposed to the invader on every side, there being no river flowing around it, no elevation from which it might command the countryside, as at Oria hard by. The only plausible theory after the study of classical maps is that the site is approximately equidistant from Brindisi, Otranto and Gallipoli and would lie at a point where the roads from these three fine natural ports converge. Its central situation for trade and traffic would thus account for its founding, while some of its subsequent prosperity may be ascribed to the decay of Brindisi and Otranto, to the misfortunes suffered by those two cities from pestilence and massacre and to its freedom from the prevalent scourage of malaria. It lies 170 feet above sea level; its population is about 33,000, and the Terra d'Otranto, now more frequently called the province of Lecce, is so covered with white villages that it is one of the most populous parts of Italy. As the residence of a prefect, the seat of a bishop and of courts of justice, it has an important official position. Among the interesting details as to local education and intelligence Mr. Briggs mentions that you may buy the works of Huxley, Conan Doyle and others in Italian and that on one of his visits he read a long review of a recently published book on Jane Welsh and Carlyle in a local newspaper.

II.

It is almost impossible to say when history begins and where we take leave of legendary lore. Tradition connects some of the heroes of mythology with Lecce, heroes mentioned by Homer and Vergil; Idomeneus, for instance, King of Crete, son of Deucalion, grandson of Minos II., one of Helen's numerous suitors and a frequent visitor to the palace of Menelaus at Troy. A storm which overtook his booty laden ships on his way home from the siege of Troy drove him to the Terra d'Otranto, where he made war on the Salentines and his daughter bestowed her "prehistoric hand" upon King Malennius, who is said to have founded Lecce and Rhudiæ or Rusce, adjoining. Malennius, by the way, was a forebear of Marcus Aurelius. Strabo, in describing the district now forming the province of Lecce, remarks that it is variously known as Messapia, Japygia, Calabria or Salentina. As nearly as the epoch of foundation can be fixed Lecce belongs to the Tarentum sphere, Tarentum being a colony of Sparta founded in 708 B. C. Into the warlike history of the colony Mr. Briggs enters to a certain extent, remarking in conclusion that the effects of four centuries of Greek colonization may still be traced in the Terra d'Otranto. Not only is the Greek type of face still common in Lecce, Taranto and the district generally but in the dialect there remains a large proportion of Greek words and idioms, which is not surprising, as Greek was the official language in both clerical and civil courts of law up to the end of the Middle Ages in some towns, while Albanian and Greek immigration into all these towns occurred on several occasions and Lecce for a long period during the Middle Ages acknowledged the sway of the Eastern Emperor at Constantinople. There is a very fine collection of Greek vases and other Greek remains in the Lecce Museum.

For five hundred years under Roman sway, beginning with 272 B. C. and ending about 250 A. D., the records of Lecce's history are again sparse and fragmentary. It is known that Cæsar Augustus landed at the Lupia and that Hadrian founded the port there a century later. A far more interesting record of life in those days connects Lecce with the Acts of the Apostles and the persecutions under Nero. In two thick volumes a bishop of southern Italy in 1592, Paolo Regio, recounted the lives and sufferings of all the saints in that part of the world, and some of them hailed from Lecce. Mr. Briggs furnishes a translation of the life of the Holy Martyrs Justus and Orontius, Justus being a disciple of St. Paul at Corinth and Orontius the patron saint of Lecce under the modern Italian form of Oronzo. The former is said to have brought with him to Lecce the devout Phœbe mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. Orontius "received them with great favor, washed their feet, worn with the long journey, regaled them with the choicest of viands and housed them lavishly in two beds." Mr. Briggs also gives us the lives of the Blessed Virgin Martyrs S. Herina and S. Venera, the former being a niece of Constantine the Great, the latter her friend, who are connected with Lecce and are said by Regio to be the cause for the title of the church S. Maria della Luce, though a more rational legend accounts for the title by a perfectly different story. One other local saint deserves mention, since to him, conjointly with Saint Nicholas, the finest church in the town, built by Tancred, is dedicated. Saint Cataldus, modern Cataldo, who was born in Ireland, in boyhood was so precocious, declares the learned bishop chronicler, that his fame spread over the adjacent island of Britain and became a topic in France and Germany. Indeed all western Europe seems to have been gazing open mouthed at Erin's brightest. He learned his Christianity from St. Patrick and seems to have distinguished himself chiefly by raising people from the dead. A vision instructed him to halt at Taranto on his way back from the Holy Sepulchre; and the date of his arrival is assigned to 166 A. D., which may be anywhere within five centuries of the truth, Saint Cataldus being the most improbable as well as the most remarkable of the Lecce holy men. More assured than all these pleasing legends is the fine Roman ampitheatre, probably of the second century, ranking for dimensions between those of Arles and Nimes, which underlies Lecce and was discovered through the demolition of buildings and excavation of foundations.

Under the rule of Theodoric the Terra d'Otranto prospered; but Lecce was sacked three times in the course of seven years in the sixth century, twice by Totila, the Gothic king, once by Belisarius. Next it was devastated by the plague, then fell under Lombard rule, and in the eighth and ninth centuries it was harried, like all the towns along the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, by the Saracen corsairs, the most cruel and ruthless of all foes, unless one chooses to reckon in that unflattering category the feudal barons whose taxation and exactions very nearly reached the limit described in "The Island of Vraibleusia," where at last the very air for breathing was taxed after men's footsteps on terra firma had suffered the same fate. From 914 to 944 Lecce was ruled by Berengarius I. and II., kings of Italy, and after the latter's defeat was given by Otho the Great to the Church, under whose rule it remained for many years. Then came the era when the city emerged from shadowy existence as part of a debatable land to become the capital of a province under one of the most vigorous and interesting races in any period of history. The long record of spoliations and pillage ceases and we enter on the lists of chivalry and knightly tales.

III.

The history of southern Italy in the Dark Ages was dark in every sense of the word. The Northmen were no strangers to the Mediterranean even in the eighth century and had joined in the general picnic of pirates on its defenceless coast. But it was not until the year 1019 that some Normans of a more pious turn of mind were afflicted with a desire to visit the cave of Mount Garganus in Apulia, where, said tradition, the Archangel Michael had once descended to earth. A stranger in a Greek habit met these militant pilgrims and, being greatly struck by the apparent muscularity of their type of Christianity, discoursed to them of his pitiful plight. He was a noble of Bari, Melo by name, bitterly opposed to the court of Byzantium and in enforced exile from his home compelled to seek fresh allies. Whether his misfortunes appealed to the Normans we know not; they were of all men most addicted to hard bargains, but at any rate a bargain was struck, and thus it was that the first Norman mercenaries landed in Italy. "The Normans are a cunning and revengeful people," says Malaterra, a historian of the period; "eloquence and dissimulation appear to be their hereditary qualities; they can stoop to flatter. Their princes affect the praise of popular munificence; the people observe the medium, or rather blend the extremes, of avarice and prodigality, and in their eager thirst for wealth and dominion they despise whatever they possess and hope whatever they desire." He says more to the same effect, and Mr. Briggs pronounces him "obviously biassed"; but his own summary of the Norman rule amply bears out the characterization. In 1041 they captured the whole Terra d'Otranto in revenge for what they deemed unfair treatment, after they had driven the Turks from Sicily by contract. Beri and three other cities chose William Ironarm, one of the great Hauteville family, as Count of Apulia, and from this beginning sprang their great aristocratic republic of Apulia, with twelve powerful subordinate Counts. Lecce appears to have been taken by the Normans, for in 1046 we read of its recapture by the Varangian guards from Constantinople, the Varangians being Norman mercenaries and so fighting against their own kith and kin.

In 1055 three more of the Hauteville family arrived on the scene, one of whom holds a prominent place in the Lecce story. Tancred, the sire of the famous Hautevilles, had twelve sons and several daughters. Besides William, first Count of Apulia, and Robert, afterward named Guiscard, who came to be the most famous, there was Geoffrey or Godfrey, who became the first Count of Lecce. One of his descendants, Robert, held his court at Lecce during the first half of the twelfth century, and life must have been the gayest of the gay there. At Palermo was another Norman court, the seat of King Roger II. of Sicily, also a descendant of Tancred. The tale of how his son Roger was sent to Count Robert's court at Lecce and became entangled with Sybil the Beautiful, Count Robert's daughter, with all the tragedies which ensued, is as passionate and thrilling an episode as heart could wish. The skein, which caught in its meshes innumerable people, including Richard Cœur de Lion, is far too tangled to unwind in this review. Suffice it so say that in 1194 died the great Tancred, King of Sicily and fifth Count of Lecce, who left his mark on Lecce in various ways and seems to have lived there for a while on various occasions. His memory will always be enshrined for the visitor to Lecce in the quaint and beautiful church which stands in a setting of orange trees and cypresses, brilliant flowers and divers blossoms just outside the city. Over the magnificent doorway, unsurpassed for beauty in all southern Italy, may be read plainly the fantastic Latin verse in which Tancred records his faith for all time. There is nothing so interesting in all Lecce, says Mr. Briggs, as those eight lines of firm lettering.

With Tancred's death comes a break in the succession. His widow, Queen Sybil, and Albiria, their daughter, sought refuge from German persecution at the court of King Philip of France. Queen Sybil was an ambitious woman, and she hoped to find there a husband for Albiria who would win back from alien hands the domain of her ancestors. She found the right person in Walter, Count of Brienne, and with the marriage in 1200 the line of Hauteville became extinct, and for over a century and a half Lecce was held by the Briennes. At this time the Briennes were among the most ancient and noble families of feudal France. The amount of intrigue proceeding at the time between the Powers of Europe is perfectly amazing, and Queen Sybil's part in all these affairs was a foremost one. Count Walter decided that as between Philip, the Emperor and the Pope the support of the latter was the best worth having, and he recovered Lecce. His young wife, joining him with her mother, brought back to Lecce all the luxury of the Palermo court and thus revived in the new capital by feasting of every kind the bad old days of Count Robert and of Sybil the Beautiful, the voluptuous mistress of unhappy Roger of Apulia. But it must not be thought that Lecce settled down to a stagnant life, nevertheless. There were intrigues, ejections, assaults, wars and all the other mediæval excitements in overflowing measure without much respite. Documents of about the middle of the fourteenth century tell us with some accuracy the extent of the country of Lecce in those days. It was forty-eight miles long and sixteen wide, with twenty-six villages; in short half a size more extensive than the principality of Lichtenstein, concerning which the story runs that its ambitious prince, with a view to being in fashion and maintaining his status among the Powers, ordered a Krupp cannon of the latest model only to discover that he could fire it but in one direction without bringing on war before the declaration of hostilities through the shot falling in neighboring territory, and that direction was heavenward.

Walter VI. of the Briennes left no male heir when he died in 1356, and his sister, Isabella, by marrying Walter III., Lord of Enghien, brought about a change in the ownership of the title. Mary of Enghien (1384-1446), so popular that she was called "our Mary," was first married to Ramondello Orsini, son of Nicolo and Maria del Balzo, whose united dominions included more than half the kingdom of Naples; and twenty-one years later, one year after her husband's death, she was besieged in Lecce and her rich territory was occupied by Ladislaus, King of Naples, whom she married. After his death she lived for many years again in Lecce and was finally buried in a great marble tomb in the Church of Santa Croce, surmounted by figures which represented the many virtues by which she had endeared herself to her people. It was during her reign, in the fifteenth century, that Lecce became a merchants' rendezvous, with colonists from Florence, Venice and Genoa, as well as Albanians, Greeks and Jews, to diversify the market place. In Queen Mary's reign a Leccese, Boniface IX., of the noble family of Tomacelli, occupied the papal chair during the period of the dual pontificate. With the death of Mary's son and successor, Giovannantonio, the history of the Norman county of Lecce closes, after having been in existence for four stormy centuries, covering the period generally known as the Middle Ages.

Mr. Briggs concludes his account of this period with translation from an anonymous fragment in the municipal archives narrating a possibly authentic transaction of Queen Mary's reign. A Flemish pilgrim having come to Lecce revealed to a poor cobbler the secret of a buried hoard in a deserted church outside the walls of Lecce. Together they searched for and found the treasure; and when the treasure was practically exhausted Cobbler Giovanni pushed the flagstone over the pilgrim in the treasure hole and appropriated the gold. When caught he confessed his crime on the scaffold, and was pardoned by Queen Mary at the price of thirty thousand ducats, being allowed to retain the rest. He founded the hospital, church and convent of the Dominican friars, called for that reason San Giovanni d'Aymo after him. Mr. Briggs comments to the effect that Saint John of the Flagstone is a picturesque scoundrel and that there would be many applicants for saintship from Park Lane to-day if the honor were so easily to be bought, for this holy man expiated his sin on the scaffold without damage to his person for only half the price of a mere modern baronetcy, and by a little extra expenditure ensured everlasting prayers for his soul.

IV.

From 1463 to 1799 Lecce was under Spanish rulers. The connection may be briefly stated as follows: Queen Joanna of Naples had invited to her scandalous court in 1420 Alphonso of Aragon. When she died fifteen years later he claimed her crown, partly on the strength of his adoption, partly on the ground of the ancient rights of Manfred, to which he had succeeded in the female line. After defeating a rival he lived in Naples until his death, winning the title of the Magnanimous by his liberal treatment of his enemies and proving a great patron of arts and letters. At his death (1458) he handed over his kingdom to Ferdinand, a natural son, legitimizing him and causing him to be acknowledged lord paramount of the kingdom by the Pope. Ferdinand had married Isabella, daughter of Queen Mary of Lecce, and although he was unworthy of his high position, being cruel, miserly and perfidious, yet the Aragonese party persuaded Lecce, when its last Count died, in 1463, to hand itself over to him. Passing over the terrible Turkish invasion of the Terra d'Otranto in 1480 and the French invasion of 1494, when Lecce was one of the towns which took part in the unseemly scramble to acknowledge allegiance to Charles VIII., we may note that while amid all this warfare Lecce did not progress much, printing was introduced there, the town standing fifty-ninth among the seventy cities of Italy, which place it reached before 1500. With the exception of a stormy period during its first quarter the sixeenth century in Lecce was fairly peaceful, and considerable progress was made, life in the city becoming more tolerable and civilized between 1515 and 1598.

The seventeenth century was more devoid of incident than any which had preceded it since the Dark Ages. Lecce took a prominent part in the insurrection of Tommaso Aniello, usually called Masaniello; but that was promptly suppressed. Near the end of the century Antonio Pignatelli, son of the Marchese Spinazzola of the Carafa family, succeeded Innocent XI. as Pope, having previously been Bishop in his native Lecce. It must have been a century of wonderful prosperity for the town, seeing that so many of its most famous buildings were then erected. In the eighteenth century the city was producing many writers and was at the height of its prosperity in the region of art. Architects and sculptors were combining in the rich baroque churches and palaces; local painters were at work on altar pieces and votive pictures. Yet existence in that century was not without incident. Perhaps, suggests Mr. Briggs, a place which had been such a cockpit in the past found respectability too humdrum, so it had "diversions," the first of these being disputes about the bread tax. The character of these "diversions" having been thus suggested, we leave the rest to the imagination of our readers and pass to the change of dynasty which took place early in the eighteenth century. At the peace of Utrecht Philip V. of Bourbon, King of Spain and Naples, in 1713 ceded both Naples and Sicily to the House of Hapsburg, but after prolonged conflicts they reverted to his son Charles in 1734, under the style of "Kingdom of the Two Sicilies." Charles III. reigned for twenty-five years and was succeeded by Ferdinand IV., whose long reign, broken by the 1799 insurrection and Napoleon's supremacy between 1806 and 1815, actually lasted until 1825.

To "Revolutionary Lecce" Mr. Briggs devotes a long and interesting chapter. In it he gives some almost incredible details concerning the worst aspect of feudalism, its power of privilege and taxation and what taxation meant in southern Italy one hundred years ago. Bread became an impossible luxury, even macaroni was not free. In 1809 forty-eight villages petitioned the Feudal Commission for permission to collect acorns. There were some thirty different taxes on fish. Rain water, perhaps owing to its proceeding, like the baron's right, from heaven, was his exclusive property. At Tufara the peasant was made to pay for the notable privilege of throwing the refuse of the household out of his windows into the street; also the baron exacted a tax for the privilege of constructing a drain. These are a few specimens culled from Mr. Briggs's limited but representative collection.

In the rising against the Bourbons in 1820-21 instigated by the Carbonari Lecce played its part and contributed some of its citizens to political martyrology. Among them all there is one figure which stands out head and shoulders above the rest, a figure that has a name recorded on the roll of Italian liberty, that of Duke Sigismondo Castromediano. The old patriot Duke died in 1905 at the age of 94. His noble and thrilling story cannot adequately be reproduced here. Suffice it to say that it is equal to anything recorded in history.

V.

Against the historical background thus furnished Mr. Briggs shows us Lecce at the present day as an almost unaltered example of a baroque city. Later buildings, with few exceptions, have been confined to the suburbs, so that the aspect of the place is very little changed since its great architectural period, which corresponds with the building of St. Paul's and Hampton Court by Wren.

First of all Mr. Briggs puts the questions: Why did the city suddenly plunge into a craze for erecting churches and palaces? Why did it produce a dozen important buildings between 1540 and 1590 and then lapse into architectural inactivity, comparatively speaking, for seventy years? Why should a second period ensue from 1660 or so and as suddenly cease about 1720? History in a measure answers the questions. When the war between France and Charles V. ended in 1528 Charles for some reason turned his attention to Lecce and had Brienne's old castle, erected two centuries previously, together with other buildings, demolished and a new castle begun. A new church in place of one thus eliminated became necessary and turned out to be the most bizarre building in the city. At that time Lecce was undoubtedly a considerable city, but no relics of the period exist except Tancred's fine church of SS. Nicolo e Cataldo outside the walls and the little chapel of San Sebastiano near the Duomo erected in 1520 to commemorate a plague and probably representing the oldest surviving building in the city. An earthquake having destroyed a Dominican house outside the walls in 1546, the friars entered the city and founded the Carmine church and monastery. Meanwhile the Venetians had erected their little church of San Marco, and the beautiful little church of Santa Elisabetta is of about the same date. Then the grateful inhabitants honored the Emperor Charles V. with a huge triumphal arch; so that in the course of ten years the aspect of the town had altered considerably. The next influence to affect the city was the arrival of several religious orders: St. Philip Neri in 1548 founded a hospital there, the Jesuits in 1574 the orders of the SS. Crocefisso and Giuseppe about the same time, the Teatini in 1591. The churches of the Teatini and the Gesù are the finest in Lecce, large, sumptuous and of excellent design. Of the same date is the Sedile in the Piazza S. Oronzo, the most baffling architectural problem of the city, which may safely be said to have no counterpart. It was built as a place for the meetings of the Public Authority. After fifty years of intense building activity a period of comparative stagnation ensued, caused no doubt by the prevailing unrest in southern Italy, which lasted up to the middle of the seventeenth century and culminated in Masaniello's insurrection in 1647. Lecce was the scene of much civil strife, and on one occasion the priests were armed in view of the threatening outlook, due almost entirely to dissatisfaction with the overbearing and thoughtless Spanish viceroys.

The second building era in Lecce is almost exactly coeval with the career of Sir Christopher Wren in England and marks the highest point of ecclesiastical supremacy in the town. From about 1660 to 1710 the Church was fortunate in its Bishops there, and the great work of rebuilding the Duomo, commenced in 1658, opened the second period. Zimbalo, a local architect, then began a most prosperous career and three years later laid the foundations for the campanile. He was also working on Santa Croce, already in building a century and a half; but how much of that and of the Prefettura is his work forms a very nice question for critics. The great rush for church and palace buildings came thirty years later and Zimbalo's pupil Cino did good work, some of it indubitably inspired by his master's performance. The elaborate façade of the old SS. Nicolo e Cataldo belongs to this period among the rest. It was the most prolific building era Lecce had ever seen. But as before, a fifty year gap suddenly follows, and we have no record of any building of importance until Bishop Sozi-Carafa, another ambitious cleric, commenced the Duomo choir in 1752. Yet this cannot properly be called a building epoch, for no really great work marks it out. This survey of the historical influences affecting Lecce during the baroque period show that its buildings may be divided into three classes: The little group begun by Charles V. (1539-49), the examples from the last quarter of the same century (1575-1600), largely the work of religious orders, and the fully developed series of churches and palaces erected between 1660 and 1710.

VI.

Of all Italian cities there is none where baroque architecture may be studied better than in Rome, where it is intermingled with ancient and modern buildings of every type. And in Rome, above all places, baroque forms so entirely a part of the place that the city without it would be a mere museum of broken columns and oddments of buildings, with an occasional mediæval church or modern shop to vary its monotony. Rome without baroque! The thought is impossible. Mr. Briggs enforces his plea for fair treatment of baroque architecture, despite its nominal unpopularity, by such examples as the Salute at Venice, Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome, the magnificent staircases and courtyards in Genoa, Michelangelo's lovely little chapel in Florence and the Farnese palace in Rome. Italian architecture, he declares, has nothing to compare with the magnificent achievements of the Tudor age in England, none of those fine old country houses which will always remain the unique type of the English home. At the time when England broke into the style of Kirby and Hatfield Italy evolved baroque. Yet who will defend Elizabethan or Jacobean ornament on the ground of purity in design? The very reason for the origin of baroque provides its strongest argument. It was a revolt against the schoolmen, an expression of weariness for this studied pedantry and a longing for something bolder and more picturesque. Baroque has its weak points. They are many and obvious but not universal. What Mr. Briggs attempts is to pronounce a sane verdict on the baroque style of Lecce and to compare it with the contemporary examples in Rome as typical of most of Italy. But that Lecce baroque should closely resemble the style of Rome or northern Italy is not to be expected. In Lecce an architect was bound by no continuous tradition, but could not fail to be swayed in a different direction by the magnificent remains of the Middle Ages in the Terra d'Otranto. The crypt and fine basilican nave of Otranto cathedral, the beautiful church which perpetuates Tancred's memory just outside Lecce's walls, Balzo-Orsini's glorious tower at Soleto and his richly carved façade at Galatina—these and sundry other buildings now destroyed were the sources of inspiration for a Lecce architect seeking a new manner of building. Added to this mediæval influence was a second one, traced easily to-day by its fruits, the powerful hand of Spain accounting for constant intercourse with this land and a consequent influence on Lecce arts.

All that is unique in Lecce architecture may be accounted for by the combination and fusion of these three great elements, the new Renaissance spirit slowly percolating to the remote city, the unrivalled relics of the Middle Ages standing around its gates and the long rule of Spain.

Planning ranges from the simple grandeur of the Duomo to the eccentric artificiality of the Carmine, where the nave is octagonal, the transepts are cross vaulted and the choir is barrelled. The Rosario is in the shape of a huge Greek cross, Santa Chiara is an octagon, San Matteo a round ended oblong, the Sacrament an oval. Santa Teresa has oval domes over its nave chapels, the Alcantarine is partly cross vaulted and partly barrelled, while the Duomo has a flat ceiling. The most sensational interior is the Carmine, and certainly it is one of the most successful. Lofty, bold and original, it shows the baroque style at its maturity and at its best. All these churches are characterized by abundance of light. Apart from the façade they have, with a few exceptions, bare exterior walls. In some cases these neglected elevations are inconspicuous, in others the defect is glaringly apparent, and forces on our notice another common fault, that the back of the façade is seldom carved. Hence if it be higher than the church to which it is attached, as is frequently the case, the back view is ugly and shabby to a degree. Statues abound. There can be few cities where the supply of stone statues, generally surprisingly good, in proportion to the number of flesh and blood citizens can stand higher than in Lecce. Finally, one of the best features in these churches is the excellent way in which the painted ceilings and wall pictures are suited to the architectural design.

In the matter of palaces and town houses Lecce baroque is perhaps ahead of its churches, and the smaller examples are no less interesting than the large palaces. Two large secular buildings stand out by reason of their size, elaboration and originality. Zimbalo's Prefettura, built by him as part of the monastery of Santa Croce, is an extraordinary piece of work; and Cino's Seminario (1694-1709), inspired by it, bears a close similarity to it.

The principal characteristics of the mature baroque style of Lecce are as follows: The classic orders are freely employed but usually in a greatly modified or exaggerated form, the Corinthian forming the basis. Columns are often broken by a necking or band at one-third of their height; and where this band is of any size the effect is bad. Less frequently they are decorated with delicate arabesques or spirally fluted. Capitals display all manner of shapes and frequently recall Byzantine types. The pilaster, however, is used much more than the column in façades, wall panelling and church interiors. Pediments are fairly steep, sometimes curved over the doorways, often broken. The difficult problem of joining the upper and narrow part of a façade to the lower is generally very well solved. Openings are well proportioned, and the subdivision into panels, lights or panes is equally successful. Balustrades, although always rococo, are also suitably designed with a view to the heavy brackets beneath them. One of the strangest details is the triangular plan of projecting brackets to carry statues and pedestals beneath columns. Chimneys, as usual in Italy, are concealed wherever possible and follow the normal pyramidal shape, with openings on all sides just below. One of the most curious mediæval relics is the dosseret, freely employed in the interior of the largest churches. Finials are sometimes like English Elizabethan examples, sometimes in the very ugly and clumsy form of a huge pineapple. Grotesques survive as brackets beneath the Santa Croce balustrade, but shells, acanthus leaves and swags are the best form of ornament to be found in Lecce. Ornament, however, is nearly always good, the fault lying in its misapplication. Even the filling of spaces is invariably correct, heraldry is bold and well carved, strapwork delicate and interesting. The iron work of balconies, altar rails and fanlights is delicate and graceful without exception. The buildings are almost entirely in the golden local stone, easily carved but of good weathering properties. If only the architect could have left this stone to speak for itself instead of covering his walls with geometrical rustication the artistic value of his buildings would be doubled. The interiors have the main features in stone, the wall surfaces, spandrils and so forth being in plaster. Roofs of houses and palaces are flat, glazed and colored tiles being employed for covering domes and thus giving a welcome touch of brightness. Some of the small domes over the church aisles appear to be covered with concrete.

Although there are many glaring faults in these buildings, eccentricities and weaknesses withal, they have many strong points in their favor. They are interesting, picturesque and bold; they possess many details which no architect need be ashamed to study, and in combination they produce some of the most beautiful little streets in Europe. It is no small thing for a remote and practically unknown city to produce a style so unique and to have retained its charm intact after a lapse of several centuries. And an Italian style of architecture, Mr. Briggs warns his readers, is not to be judged solely on the ground of its fitness for adoption in a London street, for a tube station, asylum or garage. It must be viewed in its surroundings; and judged from that standpoint, no one can deny the charms of the Lecce architecture in its native place. Mr. Briggs adds information on Lecce architects and painters. Among other points of interest he quotes Prof. de Simone, who knew more about Lecce than any man before or since, to the effect that Antonio Verrio, a native of Lecce, was not the celebrated artist who came to England, but that the man who did so much work at Windsor, Hampton Court and elsewhere was Giuseppe Verrio, his father or uncle, whose doings are chronicled by Walpole.

VII.

We must content ourselves with a brief summary of Mr. Briggs's chapters on the "People of Lecce" and the "Country Round Lecce." The Leccese, as we see him in the street, is a much more attractive person than the Neopolitan, he declares. He lacks the latter's noisy demeanor; he has nothing of the cutthroat about him, no picturesque mountebank swagger; yet he has a charm in his quieter personality which cannot fail to please. He indulges in no posing. He is interested in his own affairs and in international politics, like most Italians, but a tourist visiting Lecce does not find him the officious pest familiar to many voyagers in southern Italy. Lecce is one of those cities where a soberly dressed Englishman would arouse less curiosity than an artist in a slouch hat, for the people are in general careful of their appearance, with the usual Italian tendency to an overuse of black. In his home life the Leccese appears to greater avantage than his borther of Naples, notably in the way he treats his womenfolk.

As to the treatment of women through the centuries Mr. Briggs gives a few interesting details. The ceremonies of marriage in the Terra d'Otranto are also in many respects noteworthy and interesting. One of those, now obsolete, was infinitely practical in character, yet artfully tinged with a cunning semblance of romance. Instead of senseless specifying at the marriage feast a compact programme of items was undertaken, with the sole idea of extracting booty from the guests. Each of them had to cut open a fruit, slip a coin into the incision and hand it to the bride. He then poured a little wine into his glass, dropped another coin into the wine and handed that also to the bride. She must have been a plucky girl and possessed a good digestion and a steady head who would risk at least fifty covers with the idea of securing a hundred presents: for she had to eat all the fruits and drink all the wine to secure the embryo dowry enclosed! Then came dancing, another form of tribute. Every guest who danced with the bride gave her a handkerchief or a piece of silver. In the former case she put the offering in her girdle or her pocket, in the latter she spat on it and put it on her forehead. How it stuck there through the mazy whirl of a pizzica-pizzica we can only conjecture.

The Leccese is excessively superstitious, and that aspect of his character has received more attention from travelled authors than anything else connected with the city, except perhaps Tancred's church there. As dancing is the most interesting of Lecce recreations, Mr. Briggs devotes some space to that, especially to the tarantella, as the pizzica-pizzica, the old wedding dance, is now obsolete. He also translates a characteristic dialect story, a Lecce fable, called "The Minstrel's Lay," and gives an account of the literature and ethnology of the Terra d'Otranto. In his description of neighboring towns he makes special mention of the beautiful tower of Soleto, illustrated by a photograph, a national monument which worthily holds its own as one of the two or three finest towers in all Italy, and of the Cathedral of S. Annunziata in Otranto, consecrated in 1088, with some interesting and remarkable features of interior and exterior, including the vast allegorical mosaic of the floor in the celebrated crypt (1163-66), which is so valuable that it has been created a national monument. One signal piece of good fortune befell Mr. Briggs in Otranto. He met and talked with an aged man who had lived through the great days of Italy and had known well the great patriot Duke Sigismondo Castromediano. Whether it was he or his brother who founded the revolutionary "Circolo" with Castromediano in 1848 and shared their lot, including the long and terrible imprisonment, is not quite clear as it here appears.

MADAME CURIE'S CAREER.

Hard Struggle for the Woman Who Would Be a Scientist.

Something over a dozen years ago there arrived in Paris a young Polish woman, Marie Sklowdovska by name. Forced to leave her native country on account of political intrigues which involved members of her family the young woman turned her way toward republican France.

She had no resources other than courage, about fifty francs in money and a knowledge of chemistry. In an obscure quarter of the city she found a bare garret furnished with a cot bed and chair. Her food was black bread and blue milk. She lived on this diet for so long that, as she has confessed, she had afterward to cultivate a taste for meat and wine.

The one ambition of this girl's life was to gain admission to a laboratory as a student assistant. After a period which must have been one of bitterness and despair the doors were grudgingly opened to her. She was admitted because there was need of a cheap assistant to prepare furnaces and to clean bottles, a kind of expert janitress service.

She had not been there a week before Prof. Lippmann, who was at the head of the laboratory, discovered that she possessed a knowledge of science and an originality of mind far above the average. Rather tardily it became known that she was the daughter of a scientist of note in her own country and that she had grown up in his laboratory. They found some one else to wash the bottles and gave the girl a special table and full facilities for work.

Pierre Curie, a young man student of unusual promise, became her inseparable companion and in time her husband. The two Curies, as all the world knows, says *Hampton's Magazine*, working together, discovered and isolated radium, thereby opening up an absolutely new world of scientific possibilities.

Their great discovery was no accident. They toiled and experimented through years of poverty and depression. Few who knew them believed in their theories. The Curies were in fact a sort of joke in scientific circles.

Pierre Curie, it is known, suffered periods of complete discouragement. He often doubted his conclusions. But Marie Curie never doubted. She never lost faith. Night and day she worked in her little laboratory at home.

When at last the discovery of radium was announced and the name of Curie sprang into worldwide fame Prof. Curie publicly declared that more than half the credit belonged to his wife. The research work was begun before her marriage and it was through her that Prof. Curie became interested in radioactivity. But for Mme. Curie's patience and obstinate persistence the end would never have been achieved.

After his sudden death, which occurred as a result of a street accident, there was no other scientist in the world except this woman to take Prof. Curie's place as special lecturer in the Sorbonne. The most conservative of universities was obliged to break all its rules and invite a woman to a full professorship. Monarchs go to the Sorbonne to listen to her. The greatest scientists in Europe are among her students.

At a congress of radioactivity and electricity recently held in Brussels the matter of a standard measurement of radium was discussed. The congress unanimously agreed that Mme Curie was the only person living who was capable of establishing that standard, and she was therefore formally appointed to the task. The unit of measuring emanations of radium will be known as a curie, and the word will take its place beside ohm, volt, ampere and the few others which perpetuate the names of great geniuses of the world of pure science.

Now, in France more than in any other country, genius is extolled above wealth, above might, above conquest. They adore genius in France, they crown it, applaud it, pension it. As a last tribute they elect it to the Academy.

About a year ago there was a vacancy among the immortals of the French Academy, Department of Science. On every lip there trembled the name of Mme. Curie. Surely—but no. The immortals admitted that Mme. Curie was the foremost scientist in France, perhaps in the world, but as a candidate for the French Academy she did not even exist.

It was true, they said, the Academy was established for the advancement of learning, and Mme. Curie's achievement was a long step in the progress of learning. But it was against tradition that learning was advanced by women, and therefore Mme. Curie could not be acknowledged by the Academy to have advanced it. It was possible for scientists to listen to a woman lecture on radioactivity. It was impossible for them to associate her with their after discussions of it. So they elected to the Academy a man whose name one forgets, so little is it known outside his university.

JAPANESE LITERARY AFFAIRS.

Commission to Criticise and Reward and Censors to Condemn.

Japan is going in for a sort of academy on the French model. A few months ago the Department of Education organized two commissions, one of literature and art, the other of popular education. It is the former which is to imitate the French Academy, though it is to have features of its own.

It is to be composed of sixteen men of letters, with Vice-Minister of Education Okada as ex officio chairman. The authorities state that the work of this commission will be "to criticise contemporary literary works, mostly novels and plays; to offer prizes for special literary excellence, to collect literary works in prize competition and to undertake the translation of Western literature."

The Government censors have recently suppressed many works of fiction deemed prejudicial to the public morals and this has resulted in much bitterness by the literary world against the authorities. Among such prohibited works were translations from Guy de Maupassant.

Shukotsu Togawa, a magazine writer, is quoted in the *Oriental Review* as saying that there was a literary boom immediately following the Russo-Japanese war, but that now literature seems to be in the depths of depression, due to the interference of the Minister of Education. If the authorities really desired the rise of literature they ought to stop bothering the literary men.